DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 743 EC 300 489

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Disability and People from Minority Backgrounds. |
| INSTITUTION | Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC. |
| PUB DATE | 91 |
| NOTE | 29p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | OSERS News in Print, Room 3129, Switzer Building, 330 C St., S.W., Wshington, DC 20202-2524 (free). |
| PUB TYPE | Collected Works - Serials (022) |
| JOURNAL CIT | OSERS New in Print; v3 n4 Spr 1991 |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC02 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | American Indians; Cues; Cultural Differences; Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Employment Opportunities; Federal Programs; *Human Services; Language of Instruction; Limited English Speaking; Migrant Programs; Migrant Workers; *Minority Groups; Program Development; Program Improvement; *Rehabilitation; Vocational Rehabilitation |
| IDENTIFIERS | Office of Special Educ Rehabilitative Services |

ABSTRACT

This U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) quarterly issue contains six papers describing development of services for minority individuals with disabilities. "Goals for Improving Services to Minority Individuals with Disabilities" (Robert R. Davila) discusses the need to increase high-school graduation rates, increase the sensitivity of professionals, increase the number of persons from minority groups who pursue careers in special education, and improve outreach to minority communities; the paper also describes efforts of OSERS to improve services. "Building Bridges to Employment for Minority Students with Disabilities" (Sylvia Walker) describes the Future Assets Student Talent Program (Huntsville, Alabama), the Howard University Bridges to Leadership 2000 Youth Training Program (District of Columbia), and the Systems Success Progam (Newark, New Jersey). "Vocational Rehabilitation Services for American Indians" (Elmer Guy) focuses primarily on the Navajo Vocational Rehabilitation Program. "Migrant Farm Workers in South Texas" (Delvin Sparks) describes the issues of education, unemployment, public health, vocational choice, and funding. "Special Education and Related Services to Minority Populations with Disabilities: A Continuing Role for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services" (Jane Case Williams) describes three research studies funded to examine issues in the delivery of services to students with disabilities stemming from nonstandard English, limited English proficiency, and/or nondominant cultural groups. "Effects of Using Spanish Only, Spanish and English, and English Only Cues with Students of Limited English Proficiency Who Have Moderate to Severe Disabilities (Elva Duran) describes a study designed to investigate which language cues were most effective in helping students complete various job-related tasks. (JDD)

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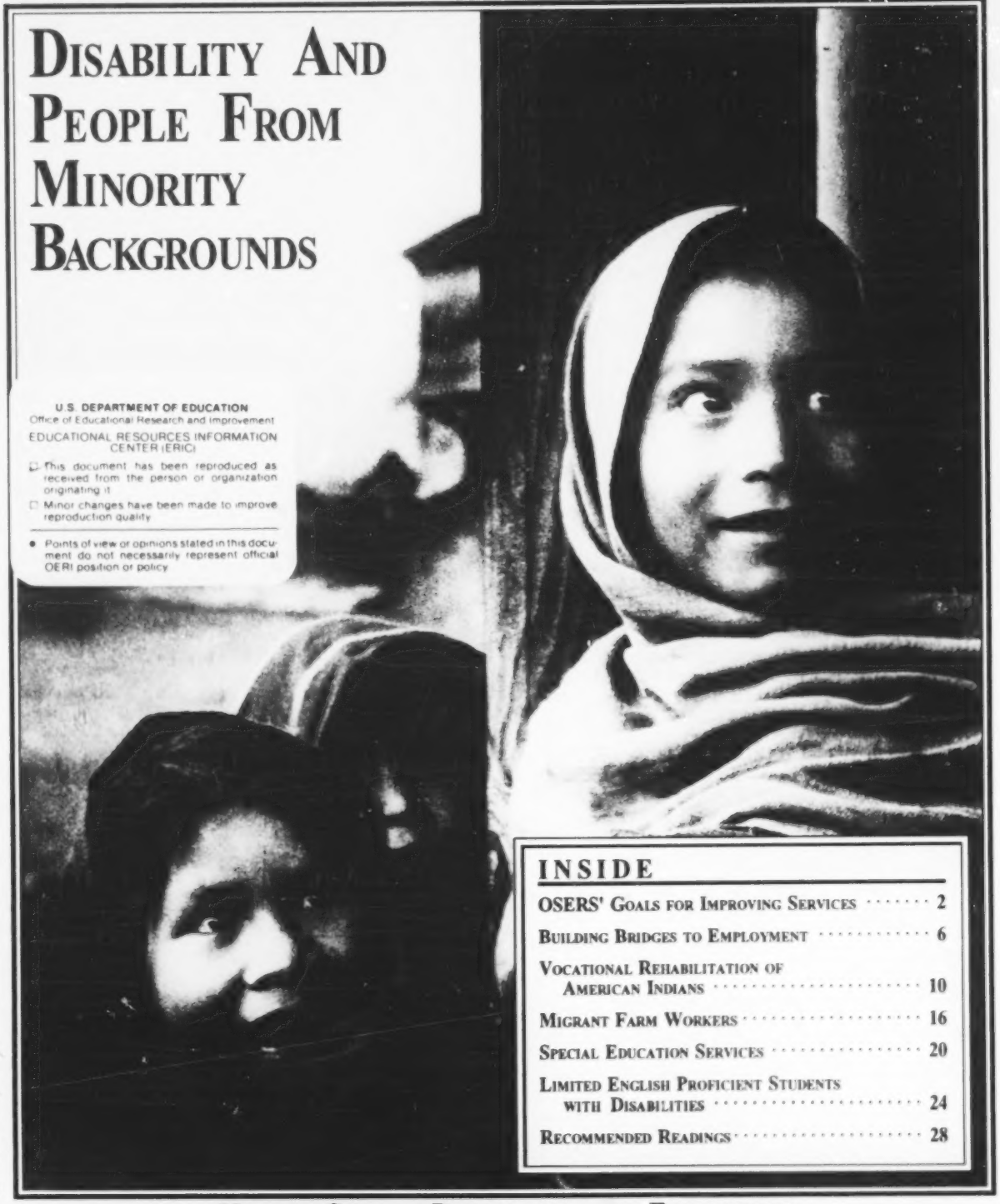
# OSERS News In Print

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services — Volume III, Number 4 - Spring 1991

# Disability And People From Minority Backgrounds



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# Goals for Improving Services

## to Minority Individuals with Disabilities

*Robert R. Davila, Ph.D.*
Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
United States Department of Education

***One of the most important issues we face as a nation is the quality of the educational services that we are providing to our young people.***

This issue affects *all* of our nation's students, including minority students with disabilities. At the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education, we are very aware of the special challenges faced by people from minority backgrounds who have disabilities.

The United States is in the midst of significant changes in its economic life. One of the most important of these changes is that jobs in the service sector are expected to grow much faster than those in the manufacturing sector. Many of these new jobs are likely to require a higher level of skill and preparation. Training for these positions will demand a strong grounding in basic academic skills. This grounding is critical, and it means that success in independent living will be built upon success in education.

Right now, we are meeting with less than full success in teaching these skills to our young people. In order to ensure the success of this goal, it is crucial that our children start school ready to learn. I am happy to say that we have already made a substantial start toward reaching this goal. Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [P.L. 99-457], formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act, will make it possible for us to serve more infants and toddlers in early intervention programs. This will be especially important for minority individuals with disabilities. Previously, minority individuals needing special education often were not identified until they entered school. But the expansion of infant and toddler programs brought about by P.L. 99-457 has changed that. It is now more likely that such individuals will be identified at an earlier time in life. This will no doubt make it possible for many more individuals with disabilities to become effective learners from the day they enter school.

We also need to increase the high school graduation rate for students with special needs. The gap between high school completion rates for students with disabilities and rates for non-disabled students is alarming. The National Transition Longitudinal Study, recently conducted by the Office of Special Education Programs, reported a dropout rate of 36 percent, based on a sample of 3,045 special education students leaving school during the 1985-86 and 1986-87 school years. Other studies have reported dropout rates for all students, ranging from a low of 14 percent to a high of 18 percent. These data suggest that the drop-out rate for students with disabilities is twice as high as that of the general school population.



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The drop-out rate for minority students with disabilities is even more grim. For African American students with disabilities, only one in forty is a college graduate; one out of every four has never received an eighth grade education. Among Hispanics, fully 73 percent failed to complete high school; four in ten completed fewer than eight years of formal schooling.

In our work to bring about positive changes in our educational system for minority students with disabilities, there are a number of critical areas on which we must focus our energies in order to improve the quality of the services we deliver.

The first of these areas involves increasing the sensitivity of professionals. This is particularly important for special education and rehabilitation professionals involved in providing education and related services. This will involve learning to recognize the cultural values of minority individuals. It will also require that professionals be aware of specific learning and interpersonal styles and adapt their service delivery approaches accordingly.

Cultural insensitivity is another barrier to interaction between parents and teachers. Professionals should be aware of the significance of the extended family network in working with minority families. They should become aware of the various orientations toward disability among members of certain groups.

However, professionals must also remain aware of individual differences between students of the same cultural background. We teach minority *individuals*, not groups.

Additionally, we must increase the number of persons from minority groups who pursue careers in special education and related fields. There are two benefits to this strategy.

First, minority students are directly and positively affected by the presence of minority teachers in the classroom. Children with disabilities from minority backgrounds need role models every bit as much as other children. I know this from personal experience. During the entire time I was a student, from elementary school through graduate school, I was never taught by a teacher from a minority background. Indeed, there was a time in my life when I actually believed that an individual with a minority background could not be a teacher. As the son of Mexican immigrants who were migrant farm workers, I know first-hand the obstacles that all too often prevent minority individuals from benefiting from special education and rehabilitation programs. But I also believe I understand the problems that professionals must overcome to make such programs responsive to these individuals.

The other kind of benefit grows out of the contact between minority teachers and their colleagues. This effect may be quite subtle, but it is no less real. By their interactions with their peers, minority educators help to broaden the understanding of other teachers. The end result is improved educational services for *all* students.

Another area of concern involves improving outreach to minority communities. This is of paramount importance if we are to continue developing and replicating effective and responsive special education programs. Our goal is to increase awareness of the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Rehabilitation Act. We know that some individuals may be prevented from receiving services because they or their families do not know about the availability of these services. In this respect, minority families and parents are not greatly different from others. Sixty-one percent of the parents polled in a recent survey said they knew little or nothing about their rights under key federal laws.

*"There was a time in my life when I actually believed that an individual with a minority background could not be a teacher."*

The recognition of these needs led Congress to address the special needs of children with disabilities from minority backgrounds in its reauthorization of Parts C through G of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Under this new legislation, the Secretary of Education is directed, where appropriate, to require applicants for grants under Parts C through G to demonstrate how they will address the needs of people from minority backgrounds.

Also, the bill includes a lengthy statement of facts and findings concerning the difficulties faced by minority students and under-served persons in today's educational system, and it draws the conclusion that these difficulties can be greatly

reduced by providing opportunities for the full participation of minority students through the implementation of certain recommendations. These recommendations include:

- That the Secretary set aside one percent of each year's total appropriation for Parts C through G to increase participation in grant competitions by: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); other institutions of higher education with minority student enrollments of 25 percent or more; minority-owned or controlled nonprofit and for-profit agencies, and other eligible institutions.

- The Secretary is also to provide an annual report to Congress on the progress toward meeting these goals.

- Under the Special Studies Program, the Secretary is authorized to conduct a study of the placement of minority children, and the extent of parental involvement, by disability category and English language proficiency.

In addition, under Section 631, Grants for Personnel Training, applicants are required to include in their applications "a detailed description of strategies that will be utilized to recruit and train members of minority groups and persons with disabilities."

Also, recipients of these training awards are required to give "priority consideration" in selecting recipients of fellowships and traineeships, to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including minorities and individuals with disabilities who are under-represented in the teaching field.

This section of the personnel preparation program includes a set-aside for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and to other institutions of higher education where minority student enrollment is 25 percent or higher. This program will receive $19.25 million for Fiscal Year 1991.

*P.L. 94-142 enables parents to be key participants in the process of making decisions about their child's education*

In addition, the bill requires that the parent training grantees serve parents of minority children with disabilities "representative to the proportion of the minority population in the areas served."

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services has also been responding to these challenges, and we have taken a number of steps to improve services to minority children and adults with disabilities. Since 1986, we have been funding programs aimed at training teachers to work with minority individuals who are disabled. Experience has shown that teaching minority individuals with disabilities requires professional competencies beyond those needed to meet the needs of other individuals with disabilities.

For the past five years, we have attempted to ensure that Historically Black Colleges and Universities received applications for funding programs by direct mail. We have developed a list of other potential grant applicants with minority student enrollments exceeding 50 percent of their student bodies. In the future, our outreach efforts will be extended to the full list of minority institutions.

OSERS is also beginning an effort to train representatives of minority institutions in the Agency's grant programs and application procedures. The goal of this effort will be to increase the knowledge and understanding of these institutions regarding the application process and, in addition, to improve the quality of applications.

Another step we have taken is to increase representation of minority reviewers on peer review panels. These are the important panels that review grant proposals. We have encouraged faculty from institutions with high minority enrollments to become involved as peer reviewers in a variety of ways. We are currently forming a work group to develop other vehicles for identification of potential grant reviewers who are members of minority groups.

Our vision of personnel preparation at OSERS goes beyond training teachers. We recognize that P.L. 94-142 enables parents to be key participants in the process of making decisions about their child's education. Therefore, it is critical that parents be adequately prepared for that role. In response to this need, the Office of Special Education Programs has been funding a network of parent centers. Each of these parent centers is offering assistance to parents of individuals with disabilities, including train-

ing in their rights under P.L. 94-142. We have also funded the Technical Assistance for Parents Programs (TAPP), a national technical assistance project, to assist the parent centers in their work. Part of TAPP's work involves helping in the development of inner-city minority parent projects. TAPP has also developed a select committee on under-served groups that is composed of minority representatives from the African American, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian constituencies.

The purpose of this committee is to advise the TAPP Project on its major activities to ensure that parents of individuals with disabilities have appropriate access to the services of the parent projects. The committee is currently developing additional technical assistance materials for use by parent projects in improving services to minority groups.

An important goal of our efforts is to increase our understanding of the needs of persons with disabilities from minority backgrounds. To help achieve this goal, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), a component of OSERS, has funded a Research and Training Center for access to rehabilitation and economic opportunity. The Center, located at Howard University, promotes the attainment of maximum potential by economically-disadvantaged persons with disabilities.

The program focuses on three specific areas. The first involves researching the specific needs of persons with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged. The second area concerns reducing barriers through the provision of support services. The third involves facilitating greater client independence and employment through training and self-advocacy. The Center's research and training activities are conceived as a coordinated, interrelated, interdisciplinary set of projects.

The Research and Training Center will be conducting a number of specific research projects. Let me cite several examples. One recently published study documents the prevalence and distribution of disability among those who are economically disadvantaged. Another project will examine the attitudinal barriers and other factors contributing to the use of rehabilitation services among ethnic minorities. A third project will examine the impact of substance abuse on the health and socioeconomic status of non-white persons. We look forward to the results of these and other studies being conducted at the Research and Training Center. These studies will contribute significantly to our understanding of the needs of minority persons with disabilities.

No discussion of programs to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds can be complete without a reference to the "Americans with Disabilities Act." This landmark legislation, signed into law by President Bush during an impressive ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House on July 26, 1990, provides a clear and comprehensive mandate to end discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It seeks to eliminate discrimination in employment, in the provision of services by public agencies, in public accommodations, and in access to telecommunications services.

The "ADA" has the potential for revolutionizing the status of persons with disabilities in our society. This Act will be a powerful tool for enabling people with disabilities, including those from minority backgrounds, to reach their full potential.

Many federal agencies are in the process of developing regulations that will implement the provisions of the "ADA." The U.S. Department of Education, along with other federal agencies, will play a major role in providing technical assistance on the implementation of the "ADA."

As a beginning effort in this process, the Fiscal Year 1991 appropriations bill for the Department included $5 million for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research to fund up to ten new regional centers on disability.

The primary focus of these centers will be to ensure that information and expertise are available on how to make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities in the work setting. Grantees are expected to respond to the needs of both large and small employers in a wide variety of business settings. They will also provide on-site and off-site training.

Increasingly, we will be judged on how well we are able to prepare young people with disabilities to compete in the mainstream of society. These higher expectations will require us to intensify our efforts to improve the quality of our programs. At the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, we intend to continue to work toward the day when *all* Americans with disabilities who are also from minority backgrounds will have the same opportunities as other citizens. Effective special education, rehabilitation, and research programs for minority individuals with disabilities will play an important role in reaching this goal. ❑

# Building Bridges to Employment

## for Minority Students with Disabilities

*Sylvia Walker, Ed.D.*
Director
Howard University
Research and Training Center

### *The Challenge of Embracing Diversity*

During the 1980s, increased numbers of minority families migrated to the United States from all corners of the globe. These minority and bilingual/bicultural families represent a wide array of customs, cultures, ethnic and language groups. For example, the American Indian population represents well over 300 independent nations. Hispanics in America exemplify a variety of cultures that are rooted in South and Central America, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Asian Americans embody the cultures of Japan, China, Korea, and other Southeast Asian countries. African Americans are another heterogenous group whose values, mores, and customs are influenced by a number of variables, including socioeconomic status, educational level, and geographic origin. Therefore, approaches to the provision of services must take into consideration a number of variables in order to initiate and to develop creative strategies.

Disability is disproportionately high among minority groups. The problems of minority children and adults with disabilities are indeed complex. Not only do these families face excessive economic burdens but education is frequently inadequate. Access to facilities in their homes and communities, stores, schools and transportation, in many cases, can be achieved only through the use of extreme measures. As a result of this complex situation, minority persons with disabilities often find themselves set aside from the mainstream of everyday life.

It must be noted that African Americans, Hispanics, and many recent immigrants are disproportionately represented at the lower end of the economic spectrum and among the unemployed. By contrast, the new jobs will demand much higher skill levels than the jobs of today. Very few jobs will be created for those who cannot read, follow instructions, and use mathematics. These trends will lead to both higher and lower unemployment: more joblessness among the least skilled and higher employment among the best qualified. Current trends and challenges of the immediate future make it necessary to improve the educational preparation of all present and future workers. Furthermore, there is a need to integrate persons with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged, and ethnic minority workers more fully into the economy.

Despite the barriers that minority youth with disabilities face, there are a number of innovative mentorship and transition models that creatively prepare these individuals for successful employment in the 1990s and beyond. It is impor-



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tant for us to implement strategies which singly and in combination influence their overcoming barriers generated by cultural and ethnic misconceptions, low socioeconomic status, and physical and attitudinal barriers. With such approaches, we can improve the education, guidance, service delivery initiative, and collaborative efforts to assist minority youth with disabilities in their quest for success in employment. Such strategies may be used to increase the pool of well-prepared minority students with disabilities who will be eligible for employment in both the public and private sector. There is, therefore, an urgent need for support to facilitate access to training and full employment.

### *The Collaborative Model*

Governmental agencies and other community organizations may develop partnerships and linkages with agencies in the public and private sector in order to enhance the educational success of youth with disabilities. The Collaborative Model, initially funded in 1987 by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) of the U.S. Department of Education, launched a partnership between the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the Howard University School of Education. This partnership was initiated through the co-sponsorship of a 1987 National Conference. The Collaborative Model has blazed the trail for collaboration and cooperation by combining the resources of such organizations as: the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and community agencies in Nevada, Illinois, Texas, and Massachusetts.

The Collaborative Model has increased cooperation within the private sector regarding the needs of minority youth with disabilities. For example, IBM, AT&T, Digital Equipment Corporation, and New Jersey Bell are providing additional employment opportunities for minority persons with disabilities. Professionals from these organizations have helped with support and have participated in several National Conferences and Symposia.

The Collaborative Model is consistent with goals set by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) which stress the benefits of cooperation among professionals, including special educators, rehabilitation personnel, and representatives from community organizations. OSERS has also established a goal of exploring models that improve employment options and adult service linkage by providing relevant experiences for students with disabilities prior to leaving school. This section provides highlights of three mentorship programs which facilitate the transition of minority youth with disabilities from school to work and postsecondary education opportunities.

### *Future Assets Student Talent (FAST) Program*

The Future Assets Student Talent (FAST) Program was initiated through the work of Dick Sheppard of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and Lamona Lucas, director of the Alabama Department of Education and Rehabilitation Services. They found a receptive group of businesses, educational institutions, rehabilitation and government agencies, and community organization leaders in Huntsville, Alabama, who were willing to co-sponsor it. Special features of the program include:

- The Mentor Program matches professionals with FAST students for one-to-one social and career exploration.
- Industry Tours heighten awareness of different career opportunities in business and industry.
- Professional Shadowing matches students with professionals in two different fields each year to "shadow" in the work environment for a few hours and heighten awareness of specific careers.
- Scholarship, career, and vocational information is shared and workshops are held.
- Summer jobs for high school and college students are publicized.
- Co-op opportunities are announced.
- A network for sharing information and services among the State Rehabilitation Services, schools, universities, and special service organizations has been set up.
- Programs are planned for heightening public awareness of the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Huntsville community has been able to identify and motivate

students with potential and prepare them for college and professional employment. This program is supported by the combined resources of the Alabama Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, AVEX Electronics, NASA, and other community organizations.

### *The Howard University Bridges to Leadership 2000 Youth Training Program*

The purpose of this program is to implement a service delivery model for the economically disadvantaged and minority youth with disabilities. This unique program provides role models, mentorship, and work orientation that enable the participants to increase their social and work-related skills and to facilitate their functioning at the post-secondary educational level and in competitive employment. The training project offers experiences for young people and their families that are designed to bring about increased confidence, information about the world of work, and positive self-concepts. Activities are designed for economically disadvantaged and minority youth with disabilities between the ages of 11 and 21 in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, New Jersey, Detroit, Atlanta, New York, Los Angeles, and other areas. The motto for Bridges to Leadership 2000 is:

B uilding Bridges to:
R *ole Models*
I *ndependence*
D *ignity*
G *rowth*
E *conomic Excellence*
S *uccess*

The program seeks to enlarge the career horizons of youth with

disabilities and to build up the skills and confidence they will need to make it in the world of work. About 70 students between the ages of 11 and 21 are enrolled in the program in the Washington area. Participants are bused from the regular schools they attend (seven in all) to participate in the program's monthly meetings. Each of these meetings focuses on a particular career, with the students having prepared some kind of presentation on that career.

At a session on careers in law, for instance, students from J. C. Nalle Elementary School acted out an ingenious mock trial in which Goldilocks faced charges for breaking and entering after being found in the house of the three bears. At a session on careers in education, rehabilitation, and psychology, the group heard a talk by George Covington, a visually-impaired journalist and lawyer on the staff of Vice President Quayle. Mr. Covington, who serves as a liaison between Howard University and the Vice President's office, provides ongoing support for the implementation of various project activities.

Exposing participants in the program to people with disabilities who are high achievers is important not only for young people with disabilities but also for others, believes Barbara Smith, a reading teacher at J. C. Nalle Elementary School who accompanies some students from her school to the meetings. "Sometimes our children are so willing to give up too easily," she says. "But, when they see successful role models with disabilities and they see the obstacles they've had to overcome in order to achieve, it's an inspiration."

By the end of its first year of implementation, teachers noted a marked improvement in the communication skills, knowledge, and confidence level of the students participating in the program. A staff member commented, "At our first meeting in October of last year, the students were so shy. No one wanted to come up to the mike, and if they did, they didn't feel confident enough to say 'Hi, I'm so and so and I go to such and such school.' Now, when they come up to the mike, they stand straight and tall and they can look at the audi-



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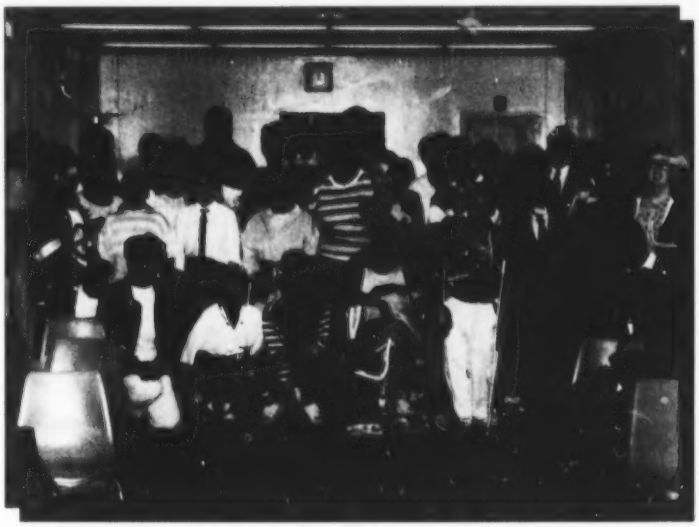
ence and say what they want to say. It's really wonderful to see that."

When explaining why she signed up for the program, Madalyn Evans, a senior enrolled in a Prince George's County, Maryland, high school made the following comments: "It would give me more exposure; there would be kids my age, and we'd get to see things and learn about different things." She was interviewed following a trip the center arranged for the group to visit the Goddard Space Flight Center where she and a few others heard several NASA employees, including a blind African American electronics engineer, discuss their work. She also says the group is one in which she'd feel comfortable talking about any problems she's had related to her disability--such as the way people stare at her wherever she goes. As she puts it, "I think I could talk about things like that here because there are some who have problems worse than mine."



### *The Systems Success Program*

The Systems Success Program, which is part of the Newark, New Jersey, Board of Education Public School System, is a program which is focusing on providing support and encouragement to high school students with disabilities. The Systems Success Program is based at Hart High School in North New Jersey. A prominent community leader in New Jersey and a member of Howard University Research and Training Center's (HURTC) National Advisory Committee provided a bridge between Howard University, this mentorship program, New Jersey Bell, the Police Athletic League, and other community organizations. Special features of the Systems Success Program include:

- career workshops;
- interaction with professional role models at New Jersey Bell and other agencies and organizations in the public and private sector;
- field trips; and,
- participation in special events of the Howard University Bridges to Leadership 2000 Program.

Students enrolled in the Systems Success Program have participated as a component of the Howard University Bridges to Leadership 2000 Program. As a result of the linkage between the Howard University Bridges to Leadership Youth Training Project and the Systems Success Program, disabled youth from New Jersey have participated in the following special events: (a) the "Embracing Diversity" contest which provided opportunities for the contributions of young people in the areas of art, poetry, essay writing, and three-dimensional designs; (b) participation in career days, workshops, and conferences including the 1990 Annual Meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities; and, (c) visits to the office of their congressional representative, Honorable Donald Payne.

For many students, the visit to Congressman Payne's office was their first trip out of New Jersey. They were excited and pleased with the reception they received in Washington. Funds for this trip were provided by the North Athletic League, New Jersey. This is an example of meaningful collaboration between various agencies in their efforts to encourage minority students with disabilities.

These programs provide examples of innovative approaches that facilitate the preparation of minority youth with disabilities for employment and independence. This population has the potential for helping to fulfill America's workforce needs as we approach the year 2000. ❑

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services for American Indians

*Elmer Guy*
Executive Director
Navajo Vocational
Rehabilitation Program
The Navajo Nation

### *Introduction*

According to the 1980 Census (the last Census for which data are available), there are 309 federally recognized American Indian tribes and 197 tribal villages in the United States, having a total population of 1.4 million. Tribal membership criteria varies from tribe to tribe. Although approximately 25 percent of tribes now require a blood quantum level of one-fourth, tribal membership criteria varies from proof of descendency to one-half blood quantum. According to a Bureau of Indian Affairs report, of the total population of American Indians in 1980, 46 percent resided on reservations and trust lands, in Alaskan villages, and on former reservations in Oklahoma. According to the U.S. Congress, Office of Technology assessment (1986), the American Indian population has nearly tripled from 1960 to 1980. When compared to white, African American, and Hispanic groups, American Indians have the highest birth rate.

American Indians, as a group, have disabling conditions at a disproportionately high rate. The 1980 Census data indicated a rate of work related disability for American Indians at about one and one-half times that of the general population and at a higher rate than other minority groups. The Northern Arizona Research and Training Center (NARTC) at Northern Arizona University estimates that



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12.7 percent of American Indians of working age (16-65) were work disabled and that 6.4 percent were prevented from working due to non-work disabilities. This is higher than data reported for the population overall which is 8.5 percent and 4.4 percent respectively.

## *Socioeconomic and Cultural Characteristics of American Indians*

Each tribe has its unique heritage. The geographic location of each tribe determines both the quality and the quantity of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to clients. There are still over 250 American Indian languages in the U.S. today. Language differences from the dominant society can greatly influence the diagnostic and eligibility process of rehabilitation as well as create barriers to successful rehabilitation service delivery. Language is an important element in American Indian culture.

One major problem on each reservation or trust land is the lack of job opportunities on or near the reservation. Another problem area is the lack of transportation affecting clients' ability to keep appointments and impeding participation in training programs off the reservation. According to data reported in 1970, the life span of American Indians was 44 years, compared to 65 years for the general population. The death rate for American Indians from such diseases as tuberculosis, pneumonia, and intestinal infections is among the highest nationally. The suicide rate is high, particularly among adolescents in boarding schools who are often deprived of the ongoing support of their families. Nine out of ten American Indian families are poorly housed; few reservation homes have electricity or indoor plumbing. Many houses even lack windows and have dirt floors.

American Indians with disabilities often reside on federal Indian reservations and trust lands located in remote rural areas that greatly limit access to rehabilitation services. Almost half of the American Indian population lives in rural areas. Problems in providing human services to rural residents include poor access to services, limited resources, lack of transportation, and underutilization of existing services, all of which contribute to higher rehabilitation costs.

Since the economic conditions on most reservations are poor, the rate of unemployment among American Indians has been twice that of the average of all ethnic groups at 13.2 percent. The Bureau of Indian Affairs reported an unemployment rate of 38 percent during 1986 for American Indian populations living on or near reservations. The U.S. Census Bureau in 1983 reported that 27.5 percent of American Indians had incomes below the poverty level compared with 12.4 percent for the general population.

The overall educational attainment of American Indians is the lowest of all minority groups (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1983). Among the 16- to 17-year-old population, only 76.6 percent of American Indians were enrolled in high school, compared to 89 percent of whites and 87.9 percent of the African American population.

## *Historical Synopsis on the Development of the Navajo Vocational Rehabilitation Program*

The Navajo Nation is the largest American Indian tribe, with a population of over 170,000 and with a geographic land area roughly

*Rehabilitation Act of 1973*
*Title I, Part D,*
*Section 130*

### Purpose

The purpose of this program is to support projects to provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities who live on federal or state reservations. The fourteen vocational rehabilitation service projects for American Indians with disabilities are directed by the tribes, which receive grants from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The tribes serve Indians who live on federal or state reservations. The tribes are expected to provide services similar to those provided under the Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Program.

### Services

The appropriation for FY 1991 is $4,082,000. The fourteen vocational rehabilitation service projects (10 continuation and 4 new) and the state vocational rehabilitation programs provide comprehensive rehabilitation services, diagnostic services, vocational assessment, plan development, restoration, vocational training, placement, and postemployment support. Approximately 3,500 American Indians with disabilities will be served.

### Program Administration

RSA provides grant funds to projects and monitors the projects. The governing bodies of the tribes provide rehabilitation services or contract for services. State vocational rehabilitation agencies administer vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians in the same manner as to all other clients.

equivalent to the state of West Virginia. The Navajo Nation comprises 25,000 square miles of land extending into the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Prior to 1980, vocational rehabilitation services were provided to Navajo people with disabilities by respective state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. The Navajo Nation began to document the unique needs of Navajo people with disabilities as early as 1955. Socioeconomic conditions such as the high unemployment rate, geographic conditions such as desert terrain and relatively few natural resources, and the wide dispersement of the population on the Navajo reservation limited the scope and effectiveness of VR services. In addition, the rehabilitation efforts of the state agencies during the period of 1955 to 1962 were hindered by cultural barriers and by an inability to communicate in the Navajo language.

During the five-year period from 1957 to 1962, a total of thirty-three Navajo people with disabilities were served by the Northern Arizona Office of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The majority of these clients were not successfully rehabilitated (Cooperative Program for Rehabilitation of the Disabled Indian, Final Report 1967, Northern Arizona University). In recognition of the problems involved in providing successful VR services on the reservation, a research and demonstration project, the "Navajo Rehabilitation Project," was developed by the Northern Arizona Rehabilitation Advisory Committee. This project resulted in the establishment of the Navajo Vocational Rehabilitation Program (NVRP) in Window Rock, Arizona.

In 1976, a three-year Innovation and Expansion Grant was awarded to the Navajo Nation by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The purpose of this grant was to develop and compile data for a comprehensive service plan to deliver VR services to Navajos with disabilities who were residing on the reservation.

In 1978, Congress enacted P.L. 95-602, amending the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112), authorizing the funding of grants directly to the governing bodies of Indian tribes located on federal and



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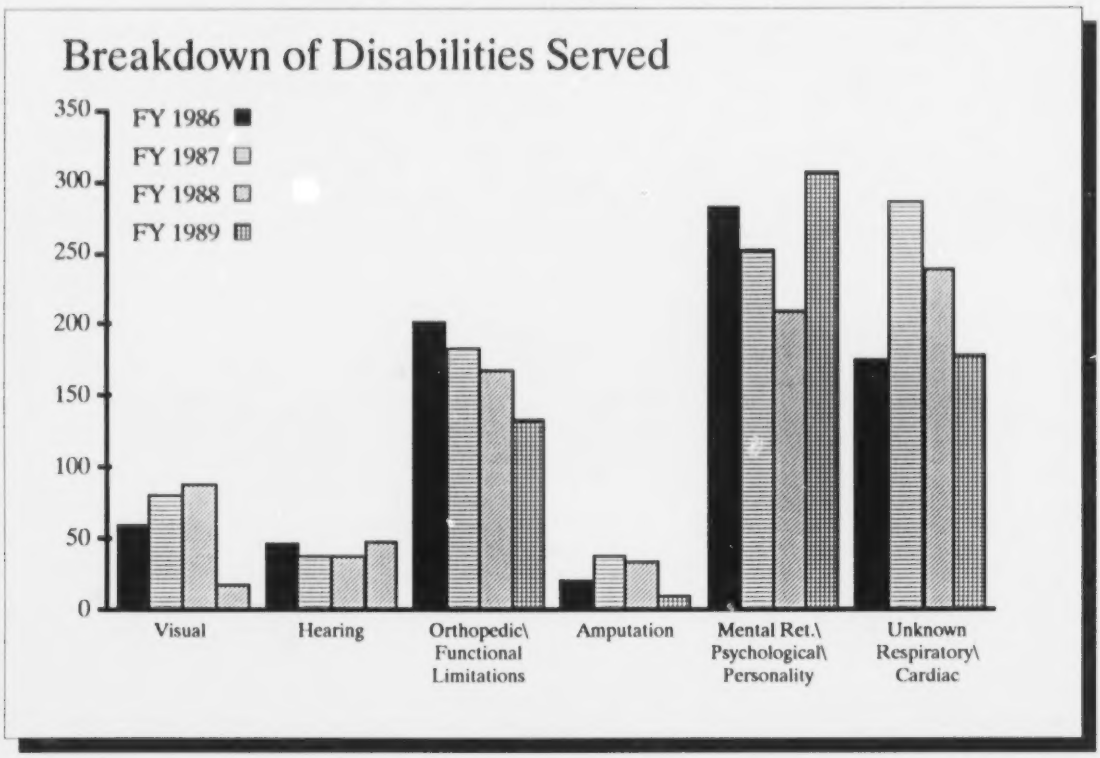


state reservations for the purpose of providing VR services to American Indians with disabilities who live on reservations.

In FY 1980, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) awarded the Navajo Nation an Innovation and Expansion Grant through the state of Arizona. This grant allowed the Navajo Nation to establish five VR offices on the reservation. A total of 235 cases were then transfered to the NVRP from Ariziona and New Mexico vocational rehabilitation agencies.

In 1981, the Navajo Nation received direct funding from RSA, and NVRP entered into cooperative agreements with the neighboring state VR agencies. The Navajo Vocational Rehabilitation Program was the first American Indian VR program funded under the statutory requirements of Section 130 of the Rehabilitation Act. This grant provided NVRP with the first legal authority to assume responsibility for client cases comparable to that exercised by state VR agencies.

In FY 1985, the NVRP was evaluated by Support Services, Inc., as mandated by Section 131 of the Rehabilitaion Act of 1973, as amended. The Act mandated: (1) a comparison of the services provided to American Indians with disabilities and services provided by state vocational rehabilitation agencies, and (2) an assessment of the extent to which governing bodies of Indian tribes have made services available to all American Indians with disabilities who reside on reservations served by grants under the Act.

The principal findings of the evaluation were:

1. Excluding clients in extended evaluation, in FY 1985, NVRP provided services to a total of 419 clients; of these, at least 185 (44 percent) were severely disabled; 74 clients (18 percent) were successfully rehabilitated. Of those successfully rehabilitated, 40 (54 percent) were severely disabled.

2. NVRP offers the full range of VR services from intake and evaluation to training, placement, and follow-up.

The most prevalent disabilities are mental or emotional disorders (43 percent) and orthopedic disabilities (34 percent); the most common placements are in private enterprises off the reservation (20 percent), sheltered employment (20 percent) and with tribal government or tribal organizations (15 percent).

3. NVRP offers special VR services, such as ceremonial healing, which are unavailable from state agencies, thereby offering VR services in a unique context of cultural relevance.



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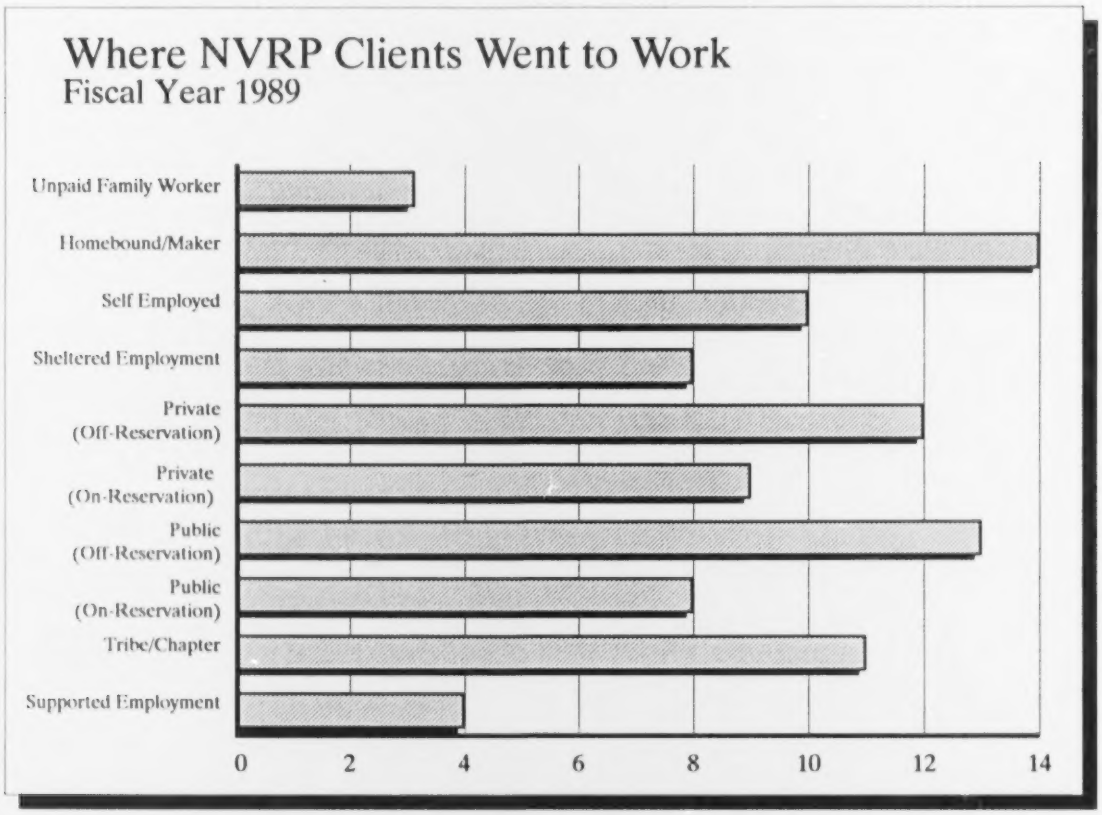


4. NVRP was found to meet or exceed all of the 31 detailed evaluation standards; the program performance was not judged unsatisfactory with respect to any standard.

In an effort to assist each other in providing quality VR services to American Indians who have disabilities, the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Directors Association (AIVRDA) was formed in 1989. The AIVRDA comprises all the directors of the projects funded under Section 130. The Association is exploring ways to work closely with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation. The AIVRDA members believe it is important to work cooperatively with state VR agencies in order to provide the best VR and independent living services to all individuals with disabilities.

From 1989 to 1991, the NVRP received a three-year Establishment Grant from the Arizona Department of Economic Security/Rehabilitation Services Administration to establish a rehabilitation facility that provides training and employment opportunities for vocational rehabilitation clients. This grant assisted in providing for an industrial laundry facility with the Navajo Nation, providing a 50 percent fiscal match for construction of the facility. The laundry project is intended to become self-sustaining through solicitation of laundry service contracts from schools, hospitals, and the private sector.

### *Future Plans*

The NVRP plans to continue to build on to what has been established. One of its major objectives is to be considered equal in the provision of programs and services to state VR agencies. The NVRP has proved that it can provide a high quality of vocational rehabilitation services and that it is ready to provide such other services as independent living, supported employment, and client assistance programs. ❑

# Migrant Farm Workers in South Texas

*Delvin Sparks*
Project Director
Migrant Program
Texas Rehabilitation Commission

***The sacks were getting heavier for Graciel. She had noticed for some time that it was becoming more difficult for her to lift them into the truck. Of all the field work that she had done, the potato harvest was her least favorite. It was one of the heavier crops. It had been an exceptionally hard summer in Idaho. But soon they would be heading home to the Texas Rio Grande Valley. A clinic doctor pinpointed her problem -- myasthenia gravis. No one in her family had ever heard of it. She learned quickly that, with this crippling disease, she would not be able to work in the fields or anywhere else without additional training or education.***

Graciel's case is similar to thousands of others. Migrant families like Graciel's travel in the springtime, work hard for three to five months and then return home. They come back to the South Texas Rio Grande Valley to find whatever work is available during the off season. As summer nears, they head back again to the northern fields. Some make fairly good wages in the four to five months they work in the northern states. However, those wages have to last the year, resulting in a standard of living that is well beneath the poverty level. Migrant work is hard enough for the healthy and strong individual, but it is especially difficult for the many who become sick or disabled.

Graciel had limited options. Migrant work was all she had ever done. Her doctor suggested vocational rehabilitation. With the help of vocational rehabilitation, Graciel obtained the much needed surgery and a four-year degree at Pan American University. She now teaches language at Edinburg High School. She continues to travel north with her family in the summers, but not to work in the fields.

Rehabilitation of migrants and seasonal farmworkers who are disabled is not new in Texas. They are citizens of the state who choose to reside in the Southwest and travel north to find work in the spring and summer seasons. Some have always received rehabilitation services in much the same manner as other clients. As a result of a special federal mandate and funding program, there are now specially devised ways of providing those services to migrant workers with disabilities. Migrant workers who are disabled are a unique population with special needs that require a different approach to the provision of services.



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### *Background*

The U.S. Department of Education, formerly the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, provided special project funding for ten states. These states received federal grants to develop new approaches to providing rehabilitation to the migrant population. This Congressionally-funded program continues today through the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration.

It is through this funding that the Texas Rehabilitation Commission operates a migrant project. The Commission has sixteen counselors designated to provide primary services to migrant workers with disabilities. These counselors have special expertise in serving migrants and seasonal farm workers. Most of the counselors are Hispanic and bilingual, and many are former migrants.

Each year, an average of over six hundred referrals are made to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission indicating that a large number of migrants becomes disabled annually from various causes. One cause of disability is the lack of proper medical care. Limited medical care is available in larger metropolitan areas but most migrants live in rural areas. These areas usually have no doctor or hospital. Common ailments can go untreated for so long that they become life threatening. Since medical problems need to be addressed before making vocational plans, this impacts markedly on rehabilitation efforts. Often, rehabilitation is the only resource available to pay for medical and vocational services for the migrant worker. This diminishes available funds for programs for training, job development, and placement.

In 1974, the Governor's Office of Migrant Affairs was set up to bring about a better understanding of, and delivery of services to, migrants and farm workers.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1974 mandated special programs to enable migrants to move out of the migrant stream and into more stable types of employment. Through the new CETA Act, migrants received job training, relocation to larger metropolitan areas, and increased placement opportunities.

### *Education*

Children of migrant farm workers need special education programs in school systems throughout the migratory stream that reflect the migrant's unique needs. Nationwide programs, such as the Migrant Record Transfer System, allow student records to be transferred by computer from one school system to another. It is now possible for children to transfer their school records from Texas to Michigan without additional absences from school. It is also possible to transfer client rehabilitation records from one state agency to another without undue delays.

Lack of education presents one of the major problems that rehabilitation counselors have to face when working with migrant families. The 1980 Census results show that, in Starr County, Texas, only 27 percent of the population over the age of twenty-five has received a high school diploma.

### *Unemployment*

In 1987, the U.S. Department of Labor issued average unemployment rates for Starr County, Texas, at a level of 36.3 percent. The

***Rehabilitation Act of 1973***
***Title III, Part B,***
***Section 312***

#### Purpose

The Migratory Workers program makes comprehensive vocational rehabilitation (VR) services available to disabled migrant or seasonal farm workers. Emphasis is given in these projects to outreach, specialized bilingual rehabilitation counseling, and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services with services from other sources.

#### Services

Discretionary grants are awarded to state vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide rehabilitation services to migratory workers and to members of their families when such services will contribute to the rehabilitation of the disabled worker. Grants are limited to 90 percent of the costs of the projects providing these services. This is a current-funded program in which funds become available for obligation on October 1 of the fiscal year for which they are appropriated and remain available for 12 months. The level of funding is dependent upon the availability of appropriations.

#### Program Administration

The 1991 appropriation is $1,086 million. The Department of Education is funding a total of 11 projects. According to a 1987 Department of Education study, The Vocational Rehabilitation of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, there is an estimated population of 289,000 disabled migrant and seasonal farm workers in the Nation's labor force with another 60,000 disabled dependents. Findings from the most current Rehabilitation Services Administration data show these projects provided services to approximately 3,500 migrant and seasonal farm workers in 1989 and 711 of the cases were closed as rehabilitations. Currently these projects operate in only 11 of the 23 states with high populations of migrant and seasonal farm workers.

*Hilario Sanchez, a 29-year-old asparagus cutter, who has traveled with his parents since age ten, is a good example of the change in the type of client being served by the Commission. He has borderline retardation. Hilario was taken to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission in Harlingin, Texas, where he was provided with a job coach to accompany him to his new job at the local McDonald's Restaurant. In addition, his counselor has continued regular contact with Hilario and his family while providing him with necessary counseling about his responsibilities toward his new job. Hilario is now able to pay for his own support at home. Without the benefit of rehabilitation intervention in the form of job coaching, counseling, placement, and family counseling, Hilario would have been unable to achieve this level of independence.*

problems of people with disabilities in areas of high unemployment are compounded as it becomes even more difficult to find work.

The most promising event along the Texas border with Mexico is the development of Maquiladora manufacturers. Businesses with twin plants on both sides of the border utilize Mexican and American labor to produce the same product. This has brought about increased hiring of younger workers, opening up more employment opportunities in other areas for older workers and workers with disabilities, and this has benefited both the Mexican and American economies along the border. Industrial growth along the border is especially significant after the freeze of 1982 when much of the local citrus crop was destroyed, leaving virtually no local employment opportunity. The citrus industry has been unable to rebuild to its previous scale.

### *Public Health*

In a 1979 study "The Health of Mexican Americans in South Texas," of the 32 South Texas counties where thousands of agricultural workers make their homes, the following statistics were drawn:

23 counties had no public health department,

20 counties had no public hospitals,

11 counties had no nursing homes, and

4 counties had no ambulance service.

The 1983 "Task Force on Indigent Health Care," a study developed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, found that:

- Among migrant farm worker families, infant and maternal mortality is 1.25 times the national average.
- In the Texas regions with high numbers of farm workers, the average morbidity rates for measles, rubella, and whooping cough is three times the average for the rest of the state.
- Approximately 85 percent of typhus cases in Texas occur in areas where workers live.
- Migrant farm worker death rate from influenza and pneumonia is 20 percent higher than the national rate.
- Among farm workers, death from tuberculosis and other communicable diseases is two and half times higher than the national average.



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*Eduardo and Elva Martinez are two traditional migrant workers who, along with their six children, prefer to continue to migrate northward in search of seasonal farmwork. Eduardo has had two hernia surgeries and, at the age of 48, looks much older. Elva has also received vocational rehabilitation services for her severe dental problems. Eduardo prefers migrant work because, with six children, he will earn more than from any work he might be able to find locally. The wages the family earns in the northern fields during the summer will pay most of the living expenses during the off season. Eduardo and his family live in subsidized housing during the off season. He works at odd jobs such as yard work, repairing and selling used appliances, and local seasonal farmwork until the next migrating season.*

- Eighty percent of farm workers were found to have experienced dermatitis due to pesticide exposure.

### *Vocational Choice*

At first, the intent of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission was to provide services to migrants in such a way as to provide them a choice, either to break out of the migrant stream or to receive services and continue as before. During the past several years, however, the need and urgency to change the migrant pattern has become the philosophy of the program and to encourage the settling out to a more stable, more productive lifestyle. The Commission continues to encourage the migrant worker to be self-directed in his vocational choice, but generally, the current goal is to encourage the migrant worker with disabilities to obtain full-time traditional employment.

Initially, the Commission earmarked more than 96 percent of funds for medically-related services, but now earmarks more than 50 percent of funds for training and work adjustment programs. Although, historically, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission worked mainly with adults, it now serves a much larger number of migrant youth.

### *Funding*

During the more than twenty years that the Texas Rehabilitation Commission has operated a migrant program, funding has been a key issue. Federal funding is never guaranteed. The amount of funding may vary from year to year, making it difficult to maintain effective long range planning. Since the beginning, the Commission has funded the Migrant Program every year with matching state and federal funds in amounts, at times, of over $1 million.

The Texas Rehabilitation Commission's Migrant Program has grown from a program designed primarily to return migrants with disabilities to migrant work to one of providing a vocational springboard to more stable and traditional jobs. The program has grown from providing only medical services to one that provides various vocational and situational alternatives to the worker with disabilities through a variety of training and placement options.

The Special Projects Grant from the U. S. Department of Education has allowed the Commission to provide a special emphasis to a unique population. The need for even more efforts on behalf of this population is as real today as it was twenty years ago.

# Special Education and Related Services to Minority Populations with Disabilities

## A Continuing Role for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

*Jane Case Williams*
Division of Innovation and Development
Office of Special Education Programs
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
United States Department of Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), enacted in 1990, reauthorized and renamed the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). Beginning in 1975, the EHA brought nationwide expansion of services to more than 4.5 million children with disabilities. As a result of this reauthorization, a truly comprehensive response for the child from a cultural or language minority background who also has a disability may be realized in this decade.

In passing the new legislation, Congress provided extensive facts and findings concerning the unmet needs of the children of cultural and language minority populations. These included:

- the very high dropout rate of minorities (reported as high as 68 percent among some populations);
- the under-representation of minorities and predominantly minority institutions in the discretionary grant programs administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS);
- the frequent over-inclusion of minority children in special education classes;
- the limited number of minorities enrolled in programs for training professional personnel in the field of special education; and,
- the need for greater involvement of minority parents in all aspects of their children's education.

Judy A. Schrag, director of the Office of Special Education Pro-



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grams (OSEP) in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, has identified demographic changes in the country as bringing to the forefront the need for the educational system to focus on multi-cultural students. Citing data that minority students comprise 70 percent of the enrollment of the twenty-five largest school districts and 40 percent of the new entrants into the work force in the 1990s, Dr. Schrag believes that education of minority students is synonymous with continued economic security for the nation. Despite advances in assessment and placement of minorities in special education, over-representation of minorities in classes for students with learning problems continues to be double that of their proportionate enrollment in schools.

OSEP is committed to the support of programs and projects that address the issues faced by language and cultural minorities in education and rehabilitation. Minority populations, who may also have disabilities, have been of interest to OSEP since the establishment of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in the late 1960s.

In 1968, the Bureau released a publication designed to identify the needs and frequent misidentification of Hispanic children and to pinpoint misunderstandings due to cultural and language barriers that led to inappropriate labeling as "handicapped." A 1968 national conference on personnel issues led to more attention to minorities, especially those who were limited English-proficient, and to leadership development for minority institutions. The joint funding of child advocacy projects with the National Institute of Mental Health and the Developmental Disabilities Program in 1971 led to the creation of what is now known as the Protection and Advocacy Program of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of P.L. 94-142 has, since 1976, reported data showing the progressive increase in the quality and extent of services provided to children with disabilities. Data from the 13th Annual Report to Congress (1991) shows that a total of 4,687,620 children were served in school year 1989-90 under Part B and Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, State Operated Programs. Funding authorized by Part B is the largest single source of federal financial support to states with over $1.5 billion appropriated for this purpose. State and local resources provide the remaining costs of provision of special education and related services for children and youth with disabilities.

*Education of minority students is synonymous with continued economic security for the nation*

*- Judy Schrag, Ed.D.*

Historically, available data have shown that, of the children served by these federal sources, minorities and other than English-speaking populations are represented at least to the extent of their occurrence in the child population as a whole. There have been numerous studies, in fact, suggesting an over-representation of children of social, cultural, and language minorities in the special education population. While problems of mislabeling and over-identification have been addressed in the literature for years, the persistence of culturally and linguistically different children in special education suggests the need for research that might reveal other subtleties in the delivery of special education and related services that are limiting the effectiveness of services to these children. As a response to this concern, OSEP has begun to examine the unique features of special populations that may adversely affect the delivery of services to them.

In FY 1990, OSEP published a priority under the Research in Education of the Handicapped program to support studies that would examine issues in the delivery of services to students with disabilities from non-standard English, limited English proficiency, and/or non-dominant cultural groups. The studies would employ ethnographic techniques to identify the cultural and language features of classrooms and related service settings that detrimentally affect the delivery of educational services to the target population. The studies will build on this knowledge to develop and test strategies, including personnel training strategies, for adapting the delivery of educational services to better accommodate the cultural and language patterns of these students.

As a result of this priority, three major studies have been funded.

These three research studies will examine issues in the delivery of special education and related services to minority children for whom language and cultural differences may influence the effectiveness of assessment methodologies. The studies are currently in their first year of what will be three years of research. For this reason, study outcomes are not yet available, but principal investigators have reported on progress in implementation, unanticipated findings or complications to the planned research and anecdotal information.

The first of these studies "The Language Minority Student and Special Education: A Multi-Faceted Study" at Eugene Research Institute in Eugene, Oregon, is using microethnographies (a combination of ethnographic and case study methodologies) as a tool to develop an in-depth understanding of services provided to language minority students who are enrolled in special education as well as those who are at risk for special education referral. The research will explore the extent to which services are fragmented, whether students are provided opportunities for language and cognitive growth, and the extent to which instruction reflects current thinking on effective teaching strategies for second language students. Outcomes will include the development of intervention strategies and materials for special educators and classroom teachers.

The project focuses on grades four through six which is the typical time for transition from bilingual or sheltered-English services to English instruction. The upper elementary grades are frequently the most difficult for language minority students and are the most likely time for referral to special education.

Early implementation information is available from teachers and program facilitators in the San Diego, California, implementation site. It appears that the transition process (moving from Spanish to English) in the upper elementary grades is often stressful for both classroom teachers and students, suggesting that a lot of work remains to be done on both instructional models and curriculum adaptations. Great diversity exists in second language instruction in bilingual education models. This also creates stress for the students who move frequently with their families. A child may attend a school where most of the day is spent with classroom instruction in English, then move to a school, even a short distance away, where daily instruction is in Spanish. The consequences are seen in children who read poorly in both English and Spanish.

The second study "Reducing Cultural Misunderstanding in Schools and Related Service Settings," being conducted by the University of Illinois in Chicago is examining the delivery of related services to minority populations. Two sites are being studied: one, an African American inner-city population; the other, Hispanic. This ethnographic research is examining identified points of confusion in the context of educating the minority and limited English proficient special needs child. The relationships between the child and school professionals, child and family, and parents and school professionals, are being examined to determine how, through these interactions, misunderstandings may occur that will adversely affect the provision of related services. Outcomes will include docu-

mentation of the varying perspectives of different personnel with whom the child comes in contact and the fragmentation of services that can result; a training program that will enable teachers and related service personnel to become aware of the sources of cultural misunderstanding; and, the development of more effective communication and interaction strategies.

The identification of the first site--a predominantly African American school to which most of the children in the thirteen classrooms are bussed daily--was relatively easy; however, location of the Hispanic site proved to be far more complex. At the central and local administrative levels, the Chicago schools were readily able to identify Hispanic enrollment. There is, however, a paucity of information on cultural backgrounds of the children. The Mexican Hispanic population targeted for the research could only be determined at the school level through interviews with those few teachers and related services personnel who were themselves of Hispanic descent.

Many of the special education children, especially those with learning disabilities, participating in this project do not live with their own families. An unexpected finding arises from the classroom interaction in which teachers have the expectation that children will have parental assistance with homework, but the students are being given the burden to negotiate their own teaching and learning in the home situation. Teachers feel that parents expect school personnel to be completely responsible for the educational treatment of the child. This is exacerbated where many children are in foster placements.

The third study "Enhancing the Delivery of Services to Black Special Education Students from Non-Standard English Backgrounds" at the University of Maryland is taking place in inner-city public schools in Baltimore. The research investigates various interactions between the providers of special education and speakers of non-standard black vernacular English (BVE). The major objectives of the research are: to identify language and cultural features of the referral and placement process that may adversely affect diagnosis and placement for African American children; identify these same features of interactions in instructional tasks that may affect the school performance of African American children; and, for each school, describe the philosophy of special education and the expectations of special education students. The research will form the basis for a set of intervention strategies (curricular revisions and staff development) for both teachers and students that has the potential to increase achievement of African American students in regular and special education situations.

The Baltimore City Public School system is burdened by a high rate of referral for special education evaluation. Initial interviews with administrators suggest that children's language figures heavily in referrals. For example, if children do not progress through the basal readers to a certain point, they are automatically referred for special education assessment. Since non-standard English sometimes interferes with learning to read, it may be that some children are experiencing language contrast difficulties, rather than learning disabilities. Assessing children's facility in the language used by their reading books may be an appropriate prereferral step.

Many referrals cite language development delays. The speech/language assessment battery does not, however, adequately consider language development in non-standard English. Norms have not been established for language development in this dialect. Interviews have suggested that speech/language pathologists diagnose significant numbers of minority children as speech impaired to the extent that they are placed in Level IV (self-contained) classes.

The project, through a subcontract, draws upon the extensive experience of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in the study of black vernacular English. While results of research on instructional practices have been reported for African American students, there is no core of research literature that has specifically looked at effective practices for this group. Much of the research that has exposed linguistic and cultural contrast has been used often to explain children's failure, not to effect change. Outcomes from the research will identify the contrasts, define ways in which language and culture account for the differences, and address needed changes.

The expectation of the research is that methods will be developed that enable classroom teachers--both mainstream and special education--to support the learning of "classroom" or standard English by speakers of BVE. For this reason, this study may be applicable to non-disabled students who are speakers of BVE and, thus, have implications reaching beyond special education.

Subsequent information from these three research studies will be made available in the future by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

# Effects of Using Spanish Only, Spanish and English, and English Only Cues

## With Students of Limited English Proficiency Who Have Moderate to Severe Disabilities

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The education for students with moderate to severe disabilities has taken some major strides in the past 'en years (Brown, 1980). Many students with severe disabilities are beginning to be part of different community, non-school, and work environments. In the past five years, many persons with moderate to severe disabilities have been placed in paying jobs in the community.

Despite these major developments, little has been done for the student who is severely disabled and who is also culturally and linguistically different. Many teachers and instructional aides have not received training in bilingual/special education as they prepared to be teachers. When teachers are assigned to areas where there are many students from diverse cultures, they sometimes become impatient with students who are Asian, African American, or Hispanic and fail to respond to language intervention and vocational programming. Students with disabilities who are limited English proficient (LEP), and speak and listen to their first language at home, learn best if their language of instruction is their native language (Durán, 1988). Ortiz (1990) notes that, if the student hears only her/his native language at home, and is given instruction at school using a different language, the student will not learn the educational concepts as efficiently as if the student's first language were used for the instruction.

This writer has further observed that, when teachers use the child's native or first language to explain some of the concepts, the student learns more quickly. Through years of placing students with severe autism, who were also from diverse backgrounds, this writer has observed that, when students were given even minimal cueing in their native language, they did the vocational or job training more quickly than when only English was used. According to research compiled through the California State Department reviewing several studies on how students from diverse cultures learn best, it was noted that, if LEP students heard holistic or entire phrases in their home and/or native language, they learned more efficiently.

Presently, there are no studies reported in the literature that examine whether to teach LEP students with severe disabilities in English, in the dominant language of the home, or in a combination of the two (Baca, 1984). The study reported here attempts to demonstrate which language cues are most effective in helping limited or non-English competent students to complete various job-related tasks.

### Method

#### Subjects

A total of thirty-eight young adults were pretested and then trained. During training, each learning trial was scored by the trainer. Eleven of the thirty-eight subjects were identified as moderately disabled and seventeen were identified as severely disabled. Ten of the seventeen subjects with severe disabilities were also diagnosed as autistic.

The students participating in the study were randomly selected from two major school districts in the Southwest. The remaining students in the sample came from an adult transition program located in the same geographic area. The students were identified as autistic or moderately to severely retarded by public school diagnosticians.

Thirty-one subjects were limited English competent (had limited capacity to speak, write, or understand English). Twenty subjects were non-verbal. All subjects were from homes where Spanish was the predominate language.

The ages of the subjects ranged from fourteen to twenty-five. There were eighteen females and two males. All subjects were Mexican American.

Procedure

Each subject was randomly assigned to one of three verbal cueing procedures:

a. Spanish cueing only,

b. English cueing only, or

c. Spanish cueing followed immediately by English cueing.

Model and prompt cues were not used in the training.

All subjects were administered a pretest in Spanish consisting of sixteen collating and filing tasks. Each task was scored as (1) completed or (0) not completed. The pretest was constructed to measure the ability to understand instructions in Spanish when instructions consisted of a single trial per task.

Following the pretest, each subject received verbal cueing on additional collating and filing tasks which were different from the pretest tasks. There were fourteen tasks, seven collating and seven filing related. Each task was cued with a verbal instruction for ten trials. Each trial was scored as (1) task completed or (0) task not completed, allowing each task to be scored from 0-10. The total score across tasks could range from 0-140.

A total of forty-five subjects were pretested and randomly assigned to treatment cueing conditions. Over the five-month period of data collection, seventeen subjects were lost from the study due to illness or absence. This resulted in random but uneven groups as follows:

a. Spanish only, N=12,

b. English only, N=17,

c. Spanish and English, N=9.

Data Analysis

The performance data were analyzed in relation to the cueing procedures. Differences in the subjects' ability to respond to instructions in Spanish were controlled by using the Spanish pretest as a covariate before assessing the effects of the different cueing procedures. All analyses were computed using the subprograms ANOVA and REGRESSION in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. A single factor, analysis of covariance, was first computed. The total score on the collating and filing training tasks was the dependent measure, the three cueing procedures constituted the independent measure, and the pretest was the covariate.

To better understand the unique contributions of the pretest and the cueing procedures to the variance in the total score, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis (MRA) was also computed. First, the pretest was entered into the regression equation followed by dummy variables representing the different cueing procedures. The dummy variables were coded as shown in Table 1. The hierarchical MRA procedure estimates the amount of variance in the total score explained by the different cueing procedures after adjusting for the subjects' ability to respond to basic verbal instructions in Spanish.

Table 1
Dummy Coded Variables Representing Cueing Procedures

| | Dummy 1 | Dummy 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Spanish only | 1 | 0 |
| English only | 0 | 1 |
| Spanish and English | 0 | 0 |

## Results

Examination of pretest performance, displayed in Table 2, reveals that the English-only group scored

## Table 2

**Performance on the Pretest and Training Tasks for Three Cueing Procedures**

| | Pretest | | | Total Training Score | | | Adjusted Training Score | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cueing Procedure | X | SD | Range | X | SD | Range | | N |
| Spanish only | 5.4 | 5.2 | 0-15 | 90.8 | 44.1 | 13-140 | 82.62 | 12 |
| English only | 2.8 | 3.8 | 0-13 | 35.3 | 29.1 | 0-95 | 42.18 | 17 |
| Spanish & English | 4.3 | 5.0 | 1-16 | 58.0 | 45.9 | 0-140 | 56.07 | 9 |

significantly lower despite the random assignment to groups. The analysis of covariance adjusted for these pretest differences allowed a clear understanding of the effects that the different language cues had on the total score. The adjusted total scores are presented in Table 2. The analysis of covariance summarized in Table 3 revealed that different cueing procedures made a significant difference in the subjects' performance on the training tasks. The Spanish-only cueing was the most effective, and the English-only cueing was the least effective.

The regression analysis summarized in Table 4 demonstrates that the pretest accounted for 48 percent of the variance in the total score on the training task and the cueing procedures accounted for an additional 15 percent of the variance. Thus, the initial ability of the subjects to benefit from single-trial verbal cueing predicts training performance fairly well. However, when the subjects received multiple-trial verbal cueing in different languages, multiple-trial cueing in Spanish was associated with much better performance on the training tasks.

## Discussion

The results of this study confirm the hypothesis that students with moderate to severe disabilities and with limited English proficiency perform better when verbal instructions are in the language spoken in the student's home environment (Durán, 1988). The results also have generated some new hypotheses concerning training for this population.

The degree of impact that the different language cues had on students' performance surprised the investigator. Verbal cues generally have been used in training for the moderately to severely disabled in conjunction with model and prompt cues, because the impact of verbal cues used alone was believed to be insignificant. The results of this study indicate that an additional 15 percent of the variance in the students' performance was explained by the verbal cueing techniques beyond that explained by the pretest. The results imply that verbal cues are more effective if presented over

## Table 3

**Analysis of Covariance with Total Score as Dependent, Pretest as Covariate, and Cueing Procedure as Independent**

| | Degrees of Freedom | Mean Square | F | Significance of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest | 1 | 35221.6 | 43.6 | .0001 |
| Cueing | 2 | 5439.2 | 6.7 | .003 |
| Explained | 3 | 15366.7 | 19.0 | .0001 |
| Residual | 34 | 807.8 | | |

Table 4

**Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Pretest, Dummy Coded Treatment Group and Training Scores**

| IVs | cum $R^2$ | F | df | Increment $R^2$ | F (I) | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest | .478 | 33.07* | 1,36 | .478 | 33.07* | 1,36 |
| Dummy 1 | .578 | | | | | |
| Dummy 2[a] | .627 | 19.02* | 3,34 | .148 | 6.738* | 2,34 |

[a] See Table for dummy coding of treatment groups.
*p .01

multiple trials, rather than presented once as in the pretest. Given the limited cognitive processing of this population, multiple presentations may be needed for the verbal stimuli to be attended and decoded properly. Another possible explanation is inaccurate classification due to the language and cultural differences of the students.

In conclusion, these findings seem to indicate that verbal instructions can be used to some degree among the moderately and severely disabled populations. The findings further suggest that verbal cueing is more effective when presented over multiple trials. Furthermore, the findings confirm that verbal instructions in the language spoken in the student's home environment are more effective than English-only instructions or a combination of English and the home language. Additional research is needed to better understand how verbal cueing in the student's home language affects training comprised of modeling and prompting. ❑

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Ortiz, A. (1990). *Teaching the limited English proficient student.* Speech given at Multicultural Symposium, Albuquerque, NM.

# RECOMMENDED READING

*Partnerships and Linkages for Success: Enhancing Employment Potential of Persons with Disabilities*
edited by
Charles A. Asbury and
Sylvia Walker.

This is a compilation of articles contributed by the speakers at the Los Angeles Regional Conference in September 1989. This conference, sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities along with the Howard University Research and Training Center, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, focuses on the problems of minority individuals with disabilities. A major goal of the conference was to aid minority youth with disabilities who have an interest in careers in science and mathematics.

AVAILABILITY:
Employment Development Department
Health and Welfare Agency
State of California

*Disability Prevalence and Demographic Association Among Race/Ethnic Minority Populations in the United States: Implications for the 21st Century*
by
Charles A. Asbury,
Sylvia Walker, et al.

This fascinating and unique study, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), examines the status of ethnic/racial minority persons in four disability categories--chronic health conditions; physical, sensory, and language impairments; mental disorders; and, nervous disorders. Implications of the study focus on income level, education, geographic location, employment, health status, and finally, trends for the 21st Century.

AVAILABILITY:
Howard University Research and Training Center
2900 Van Ness Street, N.W.
Holy Cross Building, Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20008

*The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*
edited by
S. Ana Garza and
Jay Richard Fuhriman.
1989

This special education issue, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA), is a compilation of nine articles on limited English proficient students with disabilities. Topics for the articles include: preparing personnel to meet the needs of limited English proficient students with disabilities; transition from culturally/linguistically diverse homes to formal school situations; issues in the delivery of special education services to migrant students with disabilities; and, cognitive, social, and cultural effects on Indian learning style.

AVAILABILITY:
The Bilingual Education Teacher Preparation Program
Boise State University
Boise, Idaho 83725

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